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AIRGRAM

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

EO 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PINS

FROM : AmEmbassy GUATEMALA

DATE: 12 DEC. 1973

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY: Monthly Report of Incidents,

REF :

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

DEC 27 1973

REVIEWED BY *Egy* DATE 7 OCT 1981

PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

SUMMARY: The November total of 54 incidents of a possible political nature was close to last month's total (56) and identical with the 1973 monthly average. The South Coast, as usual, led the regions in number of incidents. Since mid-October there has been marked increase in violent incidents involving low-level political activists. Victims in November included 2 MLN members, 4 supporters of the Rios Montt candidacy, 2 peraltistas, and some PR members in Jutiapa. The most prominent victim was Francisco Alvarado, legal adviser to the peraltista FUN group, who died in a suspicious "traffic accident." Also slain were a FURD leader in Santa Rosa and a bodyguard of MLN chief Mario Sandoval.

six bodies, all showing signs of torture, have been discovered during the past two months in a new "clandestine cemetery" in Chimaltenango. The 2nd chief of detectives escaped unharmed from a still unexplained shoot-out on the highway to Antigua. END SUMMARY.

I. Statistics: The November total of 54 press-reported incidents of a probable political nature was close to last month's total (56) and identical with the January-October monthly average. Statistics included 35 assassinations, 8 with reported signs of torture, and 4 kidnappings, the lowest monthly kidnapping rate in over a year. Victims this month included eight small-scale farmers, six suspected guerrillas, three businessmen, two ranchers,

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Drafted by:

POL:RFBurghardt:jcp

Contents and Classification Approved by:

POL:WTPryce

Clearances:

POL-1:ETerrell

DAO:Col. McTaggart

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a policeman, a military commissioner, and four minor political activists. The Left initiated one incident (2% of the total), scattering FAR leaflets in San Juan El Golfo, Guatemala Department on the night of November 3. Government security forces or the Coalition parties probably were responsible for 11 incidents (21%). The remaining 77% were not readily attributable. The South Coast, as usual, had the greatest number of incidents (20).

II. Politically Active Victims: There was a marked increase this month in violent incidents involving minor political figures. Victims included 2 MLN members, 2 peraltistas, 4 supporters of the Rios Montt candidacy; and some PR members in Jutiapa.

The most prominent victim was Francisco Alvarado Martinez, legal adviser to the FUN, one of the groups supporting the frustrated Peralta candidacy. On December 1 Alvarado's body was found inside his car at the bottom of a ravine at kilometer 64 of the Atlantic Highway. The police claimed he was the victim of a traffic accident, but Alvarado's family and colleagues charged that political enemies (by implication the Government) had kidnapped Alvarado, murdered him, and thrown his body over the ravine to simulate a traffic accident. FUN leader Federico Salazar stated that Alvarado was last seen alive on the morning of November 30, when he left his home to attend a meeting at Peralta's home. According to the peraltistas, Alvarado never arrived at the meeting and had no reason to be driving in the area of El Progreso where his body was found. Another peraltista, Gabriel Girón Ortiz, legal adviser to the PARN, alleged that he had received threatening phone calls and that on the night of the 30th a group of armed men were stationed near his home.

The FURD leader and former mayor of Barberena, Santa Rosa, Cesareo Eduardo de la Vega Marroquin, was gunned down in the town's central square on the afternoon of November 4, shortly after General Rios spoke there at a National Opposition Front rally. De la Vega's wife and another man also were killed in the same attack by six unidentified assailants. De la Vega was the third FURD activist who has been killed or kidnapped during the past four months. The Government claimed de la Vega was killed by accomplices in a band of car thieves, but Opposition Front leaders condemned the slaying as "the type of action which only serves to discredit further the official coalition."

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Opposition Front supporters came under fire again on the 27th when a group of men shot at a relative of Rios Montt and several others who were painting the DCG symbol on the highway between Antigua and Chimaltenango. No one was hurt in the incident, which Rios blamed on "those groups which now sense they have been defeated by the National Opposition Front." The Front condemned in even stronger terms the brief kidnapping on November 30 of the wife of Coatepeque Mayor Jorge Ernesto Fingado. Fingado is the Vice-President of the National Association of Municipalities (ANAM) and rumored as a possible Front deputy candidate. Fingado's wife claimed a group of armed men kidnapped her in the capital for about an hour, releasing her only because she convincingly denied her relationship to Fingado. The police contended the incident was a fabrication. The fourth Front victim was a DCG leader in Concepción Tutuapa, San Marcos who claimed that the local mayor and military police commissioner had on several occasions sent armed men to his home at night and threatened him with abduction unless he halted all political activities.

The PR apparently has been less affected by political violence than the other opposition parties, but the party did issue a press release at the end of the month asserting that MLN leaders in Pedro de Alvarado, Jutiapa had threatened local PR members with death unless they ceased their political activities. MLN spokesman Oswaldo Ubico found the PR allegation "strange in view of the MLN's policy of rectitude and honesty." Another PR statement on November 15 announced that burglars had broken into the party's office in Puerto Barrios and stolen documents and office equipment.

Violence felled two MLN activists on November 8, when a personal bodyguard of Mario Sandoval and the guard's driver were found tortured, strangled and shot in an isolated area of the capital. The press has not even speculated as to the assassins.

[REDACTED] asserted to us they were killed for personal rather than political reasons. ED

COMMENT: The large majority of the victims of the violent incidents involving political activists have been members of the opposition parties. Foreign Minister Arenales and MLN presidential candidate Laugerud told the Chargé that they expected subversive groups to increase violent activities as election day approaches. B1
B3

[REDACTED] The level of election-related incidents, however, still is below that of the comparative period in the 1969-70 election campaign. The Embassy's November 1969 Internal Security Report listed as incidents the bombing of two MLN offices, consistent harassment against the campaigns of all three presidential candidates and some dramatic guerrilla activity. Both Government and opposition

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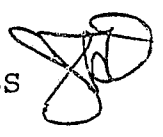
politicians predict heightened tension during the remaining three months before March 3, but it still appears doubtful that it will result in the same level of violence as marred previous campaigns. We will be watching this trend closely, and will use appropriate opportunities both to deplore the incidents which occur and to express hope that the level of violence will not rise. End Comment.

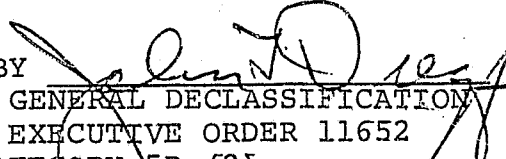
III. "Lovers' Quarrel": A young San Carlos University economics student with reported FAR connections, Gloria Haydee Ovando Urquizu, was murdered in the capital on November 6 along with her boyfriend, former soccer star Alfonso Vctorazzi. Ovando's mother is president of the Association of Relatives of Disappeared Persons and in the last three years has lost, in addition to Haydee, one son who disappeared and another killed in a shootout between police and suspected guerrillas. Mrs. Urquizu de Ovando and the University Students' Association (AEU) denounced Haydee's slaying as the work of the Mano Blanca, a right-wing terrorist group, but police insisted that Ovando and Vctorazzi had shot each other in a lovers' quarrel. Witnesses alleged that both victims had been fired on by a group of assailants. B.1

[REDACTED]

IV. Heavy Traffic: The discovery of three bodies at the bottom of a ravine in Patzun, Chimaltenango on November 8 caused the press to announce a new "clandestine cemetery." Three other bodies, similarly tortured, strangled and shot, had been found in the same spot two weeks before. Police had insisted that the first three victims were casualties of a traffic accident and at first hypothesized that the more recent victims had similarly erred on a sharp turn. Later in the month the three most recently discovered bodies were identified as men who had been kidnapped in Chiquimula November 2, and the police announced that "suspects" had been captured.

V. Unexplained Incident: On November 26 the 2nd chief of detectives was returning to the capital from Antigua when two cars pulled along side his vehicle and opened fire with machine guns. The chief and the three agents travelling with him escaped uninjured and the detectives were able to capture one suspect.

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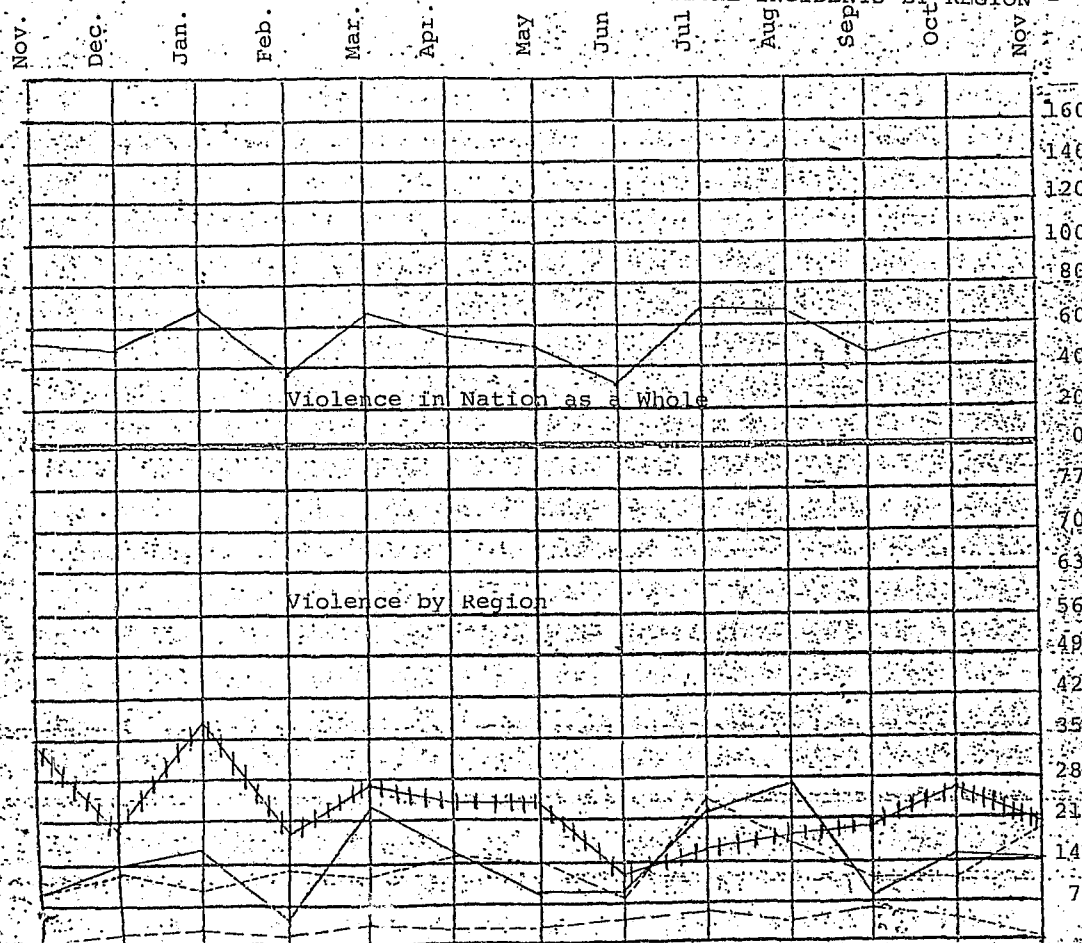
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Enclosure
Guatemala

MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF POLITICAL INCIDENTS BY REGION - NOVEMBER 1972 - NOVEMBER 1973



TOTAL 54

For purposes of this graph, acts of violence include shootings, bombings, and deaths, all of which appear to be politically motivated.

Capital area - Sacatepéquez, Guatemala

South Coast - San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepéquez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa

Eastern Region - Jutiapa, El Progreso, Jalapa, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Izabal, El Peten

Highlands - Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz, Solola